

HONORING THE LIFE OF CONGRESSMAN-ELECT LUKE J. LETLOW

HON. STEVE SCALISE

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 3, 2021

Mr. SCALISE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of our friend and colleague, Congressman-elect Luke J. Letlow. I know I speak for all of my colleagues in Congress and for my family and staff when I express how deeply saddened and heartbroken we were to learn of the passing of Luke on December 30, 2020. We lost him far too early, and our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Julia, and children, Jeremiah and Jacqueline.

Luke's interest in public service began at a young age on a field trip to Washington, D.C. As a fifth grader visiting Arlington Cemetery, he was chosen to place the wreath on the tomb of the unknown soldier, and it was that moment that stuck with him for years to come. Understanding the ultimate sacrifices made by our men and women in uniform to protect the freedoms we enjoy as Americans inspired Luke. It was this inspiration that motivated him to fight for the principles that make America great during his time as chairman of the Louisiana Tech College Republicans and the Louisiana Federation of College Republicans. His passion for service continued after college as he served on the staffs of Congressman John Cooksey and Governor Bobby Jindal. A short time later, Luke returned to work in the office of Congressman Ralph Abraham, where he served as Chief of Staff for six years. Known as a servant's servant, in 2020, Luke made the decision to launch a bid to replace his boss and represent the people of the Fifth Congressional District of Louisiana.

After a successful campaign and election, Luke was looking forward to serving the people of Louisiana in Congress, and we were excited to welcome him into our delegation. He was ready to make an even greater impact on our state and our nation. Luke's favorite phrases were "win the day" and "go, fight, win," which he was fully prepared to do when he was set to be sworn into the United States House of Representatives on January 3, 2021. We are saddened that we could not share that day with Luke and his family.

While I wish I was standing here welcoming him to Congress, I rise today to honor all that Luke accomplished in his 41 years of life. He will be remembered in this chamber, in Louisiana, and across the nation for his servant's heart and the kindness he extended to all that had the chance to meet him. As Luke is looking down at us from Heaven, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and honoring his life and accomplishments.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 447, NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP ACT OF 2021; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H. CON. RES. 11, CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 2021

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Committees on the Judiciary, on Homeland Security, on the Budget, and as the Member of Congress for a congressional district that has experienced the worst of COVID-19 as a public health emergency and economic catastrophe, I rise in strong support of the rule governing debate on H.R. 447, the National Apprenticeship Act of 2021, and H. Con. Res. 11, as well as the underlying legislation.

The National Apprenticeship Act has the potential to yield \$10.6 billion in net benefits to U.S. taxpayers in the form of increased workers productivity and decreased spending on public-assistance programs and unemployment insurance and which bring America's investments in apprenticeship more in line with countries around the world.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation could not be more timely because during a time of record unemployment, the National Apprenticeship Act of 2021 creates an additional 1 million new apprenticeship opportunities and invests more than \$3.5 billion over 5 years in expanding opportunities and access to Registered Apprenticeships, youth apprenticeships, and pre-apprenticeships.

I also strongly support H. Con. Res. 11 because it reorders budgetary priorities to provide \$1.9 trillion to allow Congress to take immediate and decisive action to crush the virus and vaccinate our people, build the economy back better, reopen schools, and provide needed support and assistance to state and local governments that have been asked to do too much with too little for far too long.

Mr. Speaker, by an overwhelming margin (79 percent), the public wants and is demanding that we act to provide more economic relief to address the damage caused by the corona virus pandemic.

Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents believe an additional relief package is necessary, while more than nine in ten (92 percent) Democrats and Democratic leaners say more coronavirus aid will be needed.

Even the most conservative Republicans favor more relief by a 56 percent–44 percent margin.

Nearly nine-in-ten of all adults (88 percent) in lower-income households say an additional package is necessary, while 81 percent of Republicans in lower-income households (81 percent) say additional aid is needed now.

Let me make clear at the outset, Mr. Speaker, that nothing in this resolution precludes the reaching of a bipartisan and bicameral agreement to pass and fund the President's America Rescue Plan, which in nearly all material respects mirrors the Heroes Act passed by the House Democratic majority on May 15, 2020,

nearly nine months ago, only to languish on the Republican Senate Majority Leader's desk while hundreds of thousands of our fellow Americans succumbed to the virus and millions of others lost their livelihoods and businesses, and everyone faced an uncertain future.

It would send a powerful signal to the American people if our colleagues across the aisle would join us in this effort because nothing would better show them that elected representatives can put partisanship aside and put America first.

And that bipartisan achievement would portend success for similar initiatives in the area of infrastructure, energy, national and homeland security, and criminal justice and immigration reform, all of which I am ready and willing to reach across the aisle to find common ground.

So if our Republican colleagues are amenable to reaching an agreement on a legislative response that is commensurate to the challenge facing Americans, nothing in the legislation before will preclude that from happening.

But have no doubt, if they refuse to be part of the solution, the unified and bicameral Democratic congressional majority, in coordination with the new Democratic Administration, will take the lead and act boldly to address and overcome the present crisis.

I would urge my Republican colleagues to heed the words of Republican Governor of West Virginia who said colorfully just a few days ago, "At this point in time in this nation, we need to go big. We need to quit counting the egg-sucking legs on the cows and count the cows and just move. And move forward and move right now."

The same sentiment was expressed more eloquently by Abraham Lincoln in 1862 when he memorably wrote:

"The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew."

Mr. Speaker, the bipartisan action we took last December was a step in the right direction but only a long-delayed down payment; we cannot afford any more delays, especially since Republican stalling already caused a painful lapse in critical unemployment assistance last year, and additional unemployment assistance is set to expire in March.

That why this resolution, which creates a failsafe alternative to debating, voting, and passing the American Rescue Act, is absolutely crucial and the right thing to do, right now.

The American Rescue Plan proposed by President Biden takes a multiprong approach to tackling the public health and economic crises stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

To beat the virus and safely reopen schools, the plan will mount a national vaccination program that includes setting up community vaccination sites nationwide and makes the investments necessary to safely reopen schools.

It will also take complementary measures to combat the virus, including scaling up testing and tracing, addressing shortages of personal protective equipment and other critical supplies, investing in high-quality treatments, and addressing health care disparities.

The American Rescue Plan delivers immediate relief to working families bearing the